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ABSTRACT

This report describes the comprehensive sports counseling program, based on Glasser's reality theory, which was designed and used with the men's basketball team at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. The program described took a multisensory approach in order to use visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities; and employed techniques such as therapeutic metaphor, parables, games, humor, drawings, charts, photographs, poems, quotations, relaxation and concentration methods, imagery, lecture and discussion sessions, audiotapes, positive reinforcement, and praise. This paper presents the major components and activities of the sports counseling program. It discusses preseason meetings and meetings held before each game, and describes how the topics of team leadership, positive motivation, relaxation training, imagery, foul shooting, goal setting, and concentration were incorporated into the meetings. Excerpts from imagery scripts used in relaxation and imagery training are included. (NB)

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Winning Basketball: A Comprehensive Sports Counseling Program

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Running head: Sports Counseling Program

Abstract

The program described in this paper was designed and used with the men's basketball team at James Madison University. This sports counseling program, based on Glasser's reality theory, took a multisensory approach to utilize visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities. Techniques employed in this program included relaxation, imagery, metaphor, and visual aids. Major discussion topics included teamwork, leadership, positive motivation, goal setting, and concentration.

Winning Basketball: A Comprehensive Sports Counseling Program

The counselor in sports is no longer viewed as someone probing the inner depths for signs of mental instability. Rather, the counselor is seen as a teacher or as someone who can share knowledge of the emotional and playing problems that face every athlete and then turn that understanding to constructive ends. Those coaches and players who think they don't need that mental training to prepare their team for competition and that all they have to do is a matter of trying harder are fooling themselves. Trying harder on the playing field or the basketball court won't do it. The area where more effort will pay off is in psychological preparation. There is nothing mystical about the emotional/mental side of sports (Tutko & Tosi, 1976).

This paper describes the comprehensive sports counseling program designed and applied with the men's basketball team at James Madison University (JMU) in Harrisonburg, Virginia. JMU competes at the Division I level in all sports. The program, which was initiated at the request of the head basketball coach, was implemented during the 1986-87 season. The team, whose

record for the previous season was 5-23, finished with a 20-10 record to be recognized as the most improved Division I school in the United States in 1987.

The purpose of this report is to present the major components and activities of the sports counseling program, which was based on research literature and William Glasser's reality theory (1975). Other techniques used in this multifaceted approach for positive motivation included therapeutic metaphor, parables, games, humor, drawings, charts, photographs, poems, quotations, relaxation, and concentration methods, imagery, lecture/discussion sessions, audio tapes, positive reinforcement, and praise. This program took a multisensory form to utilize visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities.

Preseason Meetings

Meetings with the team were held at least twice each week beginning with the preseason practices. In addition, individual counseling sessions were offered to the team members. During the season, most of the players took advantage of the opportunity to discuss, on a one-to-one basis, a wide range of issues including habit control, leadership abilities, anxiety and relaxation problems, and specific imagery for skill enhancement.

At the initial session, the need for mental preparation in coordination with physical preparation was discussed. Sketches of expected outcomes using each mode separately and as a combined package were used for emphasis. The basic principles of Glasser's control theory (1984) were explained and related to the sport of basketball to instill a feeling of possessing a powerful control in each team member. They were asked to suggest mental preparation topics for the team meetings which would strengthen their playing ability. Ideas and comments from the team were solicited during every meeting, and each suggestion was utilized and practiced during the successive meetings. The topics which arose during this orientation session were: teamwork, communication, cooperation, leadership, attitudes, motivation, concentration, relaxation, goal setting, and blocking out injuries after recovery. This list of topics was duplicated and distributed at the following meeting.

During the ensuing meetings, all of the above topics were discussed. Control theory was put into practice in the form of each player assuming responsibility for his own mental and physical preparation. The word RESPONSIBILITY became an obvious focal point in the sessions. This focus provided a natural flow to the introduction of Glasser's reality theory (1975) and the

eight steps necessary to put the theory into application. The steps established the framework that was required for all of the goal setting developed and put into practice during the sports counseling program for team contribution, reinforcement of team members, individual skill improvement, game goals, etc. These goals were couched within the framework and personal acceptance of these eight steps:

1. What do you want?
2. What are you doing now?
3. How could it be improved?
4. What is your plan for change?
5. How will you know if it is working?
6. What can you do to sabotage your plan?
7. Make a commitment to your plan.
8. Never give up.

As part of their commitment to the attainment of their goals, players added, "I have the desire to accomplish this goal," and then signed their names.

One of the players, a young man from the Netherlands, inspired by the word DESIRE, wrote the following poem which was read to the group and later incorporated into a game preparation imagery plan.

I have a desire

A desire to desire

to desire to be a winner.

A winner is on top,

on top of the world means feeling good.

Feeling good about achievements,

and achievements start out as goals.

Goals that are desired

Leave nothing to be desired.

Each player wrote his personal plan on a 5 X 8 index card. The plans were read and discussed, and the players developed the ability to formulate their plans in observable, measurable terms with specific illustrations of such goals as rewards or reinforcements given to a teammate who needed it and as examples of personal praise they gave themselves whenever it was deserved. As the players took responsibility for being active team members promoting cohesiveness and unity, as they followed the steps of their selected plans, a strong team spirit was developed, and high morale was maintained.

The following is an example of a lecture delivered at one of the team meetings. It provides an illustration of some of the factors covered above, as well as a program topic.

Team Leadership

Today we're going to talk about TEAM leadership, because (captain) can lead, but if all everybody else does is follow, you will be unsuccessful as a team. Therefore, we are going to talk about ways in which each person must become a leader. I didn't say can become, I said must become.

First, good leadership is a way of life, not just knowing factual stuff about leading.

Every week you watch sports teams on television--all of them know how to play the game. Each week some succeed while others fail. I maintain that the difference between successful and unsuccessful teams is just what constitutes the difference between successful versus unsuccessful leadership--a good outlook on life and an ability to absorb the day's pressures while maintaining objective awareness. This ability is one of my goals for these sessions--that you will become more proficient at absorbing pressures and more able to maintain a good outlook on life.

Second, leadership styles vary between individuals. What works for one does not necessarily work for another. Each of us has to find our own style.

I will now offer you four recommendations that I think will

be useful to you in your TEAM leadership positions and for the rest of your lives and in your jobs. It will probably be true in your first job that you will not have any employees working for you; however, remember that you will always have at least one employee--one person to lead--YOURSELF.

1. Make a plan. I'm not talking strategic planning (that's your coaches' job). I'm talking about your plan for your personal objectives.

At least once a month, sit down and determine what you want to accomplish in your sport--regardless of what others want you to accomplish, and more importantly, sit down every season at the beginning and write out what you want to accomplish in that season and be specific.

If you want to see your team in the NCAA playoffs, write that down. Become an 86% free-throw shooter, grab 10 rebounds a game, bench press 400 lbs.--write that down. Remember, you cannot reach a goal until you can see it, and in order to see it, you first have to determine what it is you want and where you want do to. Remember Yogi Berra? He said, "If you do not know where you want to go, you're liable to get there."

The reason you must plan is obvious--focusing on a few major objectives so that you can concentrate your efforts on

them. The more narrowly focused leader will have a much greater chance of success than the leader who tries to accomplish every good idea that comes to him or her.

Set your goals to the almost unreachable point--hitch your wagon to a star, and do not set your sights so low that you accomplish your objectives too early and don't know what to do. Don't laugh at the player who tells you he will have 25 assists a game. He has the right idea in goal setting.

2. Remember that, just as your leadership style must be one that fits you individually, it must be appropriate for you, attractive to you, and it must satisfy your needs. For example, if you are not the center on the team, it would not be appropriate for you to set for yourself the goal of outjumping the opposing center at the start of the game. If making 5 hook shots a game is not attractive to you, working to make 5 a game would not satisfy your needs. As a team leader, you might get more satisfaction out of drawing 2 fouls from the other team. Be creative, be open-minded. Look into yourself for your goals. Make your plan to get you what you want.

3. Listen for the unspoken word from those you play with--listen very carefully as a leader.

A fact of life of leadership is that it is the rare player

who tells you what is on his mind. Athletes are not always very open to one another to begin with, and if you add to that the fact that some are perceived to have more power over others in one area or another, then it stands to reason that players are not going to tell each other much--at least not directly.

But indirectly, you tell each other a lot, and it is important to listen.

Listen for frustration.

Listen for lost dreams.

Listen for a need for a new challenge.

Listen for a loss of direction.

Listen for someone asking for a pat on the back.

Learn to listen intensely rather than superficially, and you will learn a lot about being a leader. To listen this way, I believe leaders have to trust their intuition as well as their logic. Creativity is an intuitive phenomenon, and it is the single most important ingredient for the great successes in the world. For example: artists, composers, authors, basketball players do new, creative things. Leaders help to relieve frustration, help to set new goals, new direction, give a pat on the back.

4. Develop a strong personal rewards system. Don't look

frequently to others to tell you that you are doing a good job.

The leader has to be able to pat himself on the back, because followers rarely will. The pat cannot be conceited or arrogant, because the leader has to continually assess his own performance. But the pat must allow the leader to get through extended periods of time alone. You cannot go to others and ask for pats, because that implies weakness. I also contend that you shouldn't go to your coach for your reward, because that gives your coach more power over your life than you want to give him. When players constantly go to the coach for their strokes, it indicates that they do not have their own personal rewards system. Therefore, it is symptomatic of a greater problem. Can you imagine Larry Bird constantly running to his coach for strokes?

As a leader, recognize the weaknesses of your teammates and help them to grow. But also recognize their strengths and reinforce their positive abilities--honestly appreciate what they will do well.

One does not learn leadership and then do it. One keeps learning about it and hopefully keeps getting better at it (Warren, Note 1).

Several lecture/discussions sessions were devoted to the

topics of positive motivation as addressed by Denis Waitley in The Psychology of Winning (1986).

1. Positive Self-Expectancy. Winners expect to win, and programming your mind is the best way to program your body. The components of positive self-expectancy include looking at problems as opportunities to become successful; learning to stay relaxed no matter how much tension you are under; praising instead of griping; and being excited about your dreams.

2. Positive Self-Motivation. This is the inner drive that puts optimism into action. We become what we desire to be, and we are all motivated to do something, positive or negative, even if it is to do nothing. Motivation cannot be pumped in from the outside. The dream must be identified and internalized (Maslow, 1976). Winners in life dwell on the rewards of success rather than on the fear of failure. As part of their positive self-statement training, players were given a cognitive demonstration using the phrase, "Don't think of a white horse." All agreed that they immediately did think of a white horse. This example illustrates the manner in which players dwell on not losing a game rather than on winning the game. It was suggested that if they chose to use a reverse intention technique during tense game times, they instruct themselves, "Don't think of how

much fun it is to play basketball; don't think of how your body feels when it is relaxed; don't remember the exhilaration and excitement of making your shots and winning the game." Losers look at others who have talents they desire and ridicule them. Winners identify desirable traits in others and plan how to develop them. They don't waste time on ridicule. Most team members had magazine pictures of NBA leaders making impressive plays, and they were asked to focus on these as models. As the season progressed and the number of available photographs of their own best plays increased, the team was asked to focus on these photos in imagery sequences and before going to sleep at night.

3. Positive Self-Images. Imagination is everything, and it is what you imagine that you attain. We are controlled by mental pictures in our minds (Glasser, 1984). Every player admitted to daydreaming, and they were asked to make constructive use of that time by putting themselves on TV and watching themselves accomplishing all that they would like in basketball. Your unconscious will accept as fact that which you vividly imagine, and so the team was requested to set aside 20 minutes a day for basketball imagery.

4. Positive Self-Direction. Success is the day-to-day

working at the attainment of goals which are important to the individual. Dreams should be just out of reach but never out of sight. Winners are always thinking of goal achieving rather than tension relieving. Players were asked to check their goals (8 step plans) every night before going to bed to stay focused on those goals.

5. Positive Self-Control. Life is a do-it-to-yourself program, and the team was asked to take the responsibility for making winning things happen. Underachievers feel like fate or bad luck is doing it to them. Winners know where they're going, and everybody else knows where they're going--they can see them going there. Winners know everything they do (except to breathe) is a choice that they make (Glasser, 1984). There is no such thing as an "overachiever." How can one achieve more than is possible? We do not know we are in a prison of our own making until we break out. When you set a new goal and attain it and look back, you wonder why you never did that before. You can always achieve as much as you have in the past, and future accomplishments may be even greater.

6. Positive Self-Discipline. Practice, practice, practice, and bet on yourself. Put your behaviors where your mouth is. Players were asked to commit to memory new images

that would take precedence over old images. Olympic gold medal winners see themselves playing, skating, or skiing perfectly. They never see themselves falling or missing a shot. The team was told to imagine their opponents missing shots and themselves always being in position and rebounding to turn others' misses into positive achievements for the JMU Dukes. Imagery such as this is easier for an individual athlete and more difficult for an entire team, because everyone must be committed to the same goal. The team was asked to remember that every goal they achieved had started as a flimsy notion over which they took control and assumed responsibility--to be obsessed with new dreams. They were asked to feel the positive effect of self-statements by repeating to themselves:

I want to.

I can.

I'm improving.

I choose.

I look forward to.

I'm feeling better now.

I'll do it.

Then, as the season began, the team was asked to choose a word on which to focus; a word they could feel, see, and hear in

imagery; a word that would represent and catch the essence of the new season for them. The word they chose was DOMINATION. For them, 1986-87 became the JMU season of DOMINATION.

Relaxation Training

Relaxation as an essential element for peak performance has long been recognized. It is a necessary tool for coping with the anxieties and fears that fragment athletes' minds and cause muscle tensions that sap their playing energy. Relaxation is an antithetical response to fear, anxiety, and other negative emotions, as one cannot feel relaxed and anxious at the same time.

When athletes' bodies are relaxed, their anxieties subside, their unnecessary muscle tension is released, and they will be ready to concentrate on their play. Concentration may be defined as the ability to focus on an object or experience as it is taking place. For basketball players, concentration means being able to wipe everything out of their minds except the basketball and their actions in the game. It allows players at the free-throw line to forget the crowd, tune out the noise, and concentrate on the basket. Concentration is not fiercely straining to produce a state of focused energy and attention. It is the pleasant sensation of feeling free and loose, calm and

confident; the effortless effort of not trying (Smith, 1975).

Garfield (1984) offers some descriptions of the poised athlete who is feeling right and able to produce an optimal performance because of an ideal state of mind. Athletes who possess peak performance feelings are those who have an internal climate that is characterized by high-level energy intensity coupled with a deep sense of inner calmness. Poised athletes are those who are mentally and physically relaxed, confident and optimistic, energized and aware, focused on the present and in control.

In this sports counseling program, many different relaxation techniques were utilized. The team was instructed in the use of deep muscle relaxation for fatigue reduction and sleep preparation (Lazarus, 1977). They learned the "Letting Go" response for release of muscle tension during a game and the "Breathing Easy" technique for relieving nervous tension (Tutko & Tosi, 1976). When breathing is slow and deep, athletes can remain calm, poised, and assured. These responses were practiced in group sessions until team members recognized the warm, loose feeling of totally relaxed muscles, and were able to give their bodies the command to "Let Go" during games to release muscle tension. The team was also taught to feel the

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difference between debilitating hyperventilation and the natural contraction and flow of relaxed, smooth breathing. To recall these good sensations whenever anxieties might arise, as in a test or game situation, the student athletes learned to say, "Easy," to themselves to regain necessary calmness and control.

To prepare for pregame imagery sessions, brief introductory relaxation exercises were employed. Gestalt techniques as described by Passons (1975) were often implemented. The following example, adapted from Hadley and Staudacher (1985), was frequently used and much appreciated by the team.

> Make sure you are completely comfortable, stretch your legs, your arms. And now begin to relax. Close your eyes and take a deep breath . . . and exhale . . . and relax. Completely relax. . . . Relax your legs, . . . lower back, . . . relax your shoulders. . . . Relax your shoulders, your arms, . . . your neck, . . . your face. . . . Relax your whole body, . . . just relax. . . . Take another deep breath . . . and exhale . . . let go, . . . and relax. . . . Become aware of the rhythm of your breathing. . . . Begin to flow with the rhythm of your breathing, and as you inhale, relax your breathing and begin to feel your body drift and float into relaxation. . . . The sounds around

you are unimportant, let them go, and relax. Let every muscle in your body completely relax from the top of your head to the tips of your toes. . . . As you inhale gently, relax. . . . As you exhale, release any tension, any stress from any part of your body, mind and thoughts. . . .

Notice how very comfortable your body feels, just drifting and floating, deeper, deeper, deeper relaxed. . . . And as you are relaxing deeper and deeper, imagine a beautiful staircase. . . . There are ten steps, and the steps lead you to a special and peaceful and beautiful place. . . . In a moment you can begin to imagine taking a safe and gentle and easy step down, down, down on the staircase, leading you to a very peaceful, a very special place for you. . . .

In a moment I'm going to count backwards from ten to one and you can imagine taking the steps down, and as you take each step, feel your body relax, more and more, . . . feel it just drift down, down each step, and relax even deeper, . . . ten, relax even deeper, . . . nine . . . eight . . . seven . . . six . . . five . . . four . . . three . . . two . . . one . . . deeper, deeper, deeper relaxed. . . .

Imagery

"To accomplish great things, we must not only act but also dream, not only plan but also believe."

-- Anatole France

The potential utility of mental imagery far exceeds its actual use by most professionals (Lazarus, 1978). Mental imagery is not simply a picture in the brain, but a product of physiological responses that can be measured. One advantage to this sort of athletic imagery rehearsal is its similarity to the actual competitive event (Singer, 1977). Of course, physical practice is necessary, but practice under practice conditions is an imperfect way of preparing for game conditions. The more a team practices the sport under gamelike conditions, such as a scrimmage in full uniform on the court on which the game will be played, the more likely a good performance will be repeated during the game itself. The goal of imagery is to rehearse optimal physical actions that produce an ideal performance (Ogilvie & Howe, 1984; Suinn, 1976). Most useful is a combination of physical and mental practice in proper proportions (Cratty, 1984). As noted by Kiester (1984), mental preparation cannot be achieved with a short rehearsal a day or so before a game. Athletes need a certain time frame in which

to learn, to commit, and to practice before the games begin.

Before the start of their official basketball season, the JMU team began the mental imagery practice of their short-term goals. They were asked to clearly create mental images of their goals and to focus on the physical performance of the desired athletic improvement or change. For example, if a player had chosen rebounding as an individual goal, the player was asked to see himself in a game situation,

> . . . You never get pushed inside the paint . . . you are aggressive . . . you never let a guy get a hand on your hip or push you inside . . . you are always outside the paint in position for a rebound.

Those players who had chosen jump shot refinement would be asked to,

> . . . Picture yourself up and ready to shoot before the defender reacts and moves. . . . Your jump shot is indefensible. . . . You have both feet on the ground, squared up to the basket. . . . See the ball being shot off the fingertips of your shooting hand with your remaining hand acting as a guide to help position the ball. . . . You follow through with your shot. . . . Success.

Visual images create expectancies that can serve as self-fulfilling prophecies that mobilize conscious and unconscious areas of cerebral functioning. Athletes feel their muscles in action when they mentally rehearse their sport. This rehearsal is far more than simple imagination. It is a well-controlled copy of physical experience, like a kind of "body-thinking" similar to certain kinds of dreaming at night. The major difference between dreams and imagery is that imagery rehearsal is subject to conscious control (Suinn, 1976). Engaging in athletics with any degree of intensity involves a large amount of physical control and mental concentration. Some athletes describe what they call "muscle memory" or the body's keen awareness for how each limb, each muscle must be positioned in order to perform successfully. The physical control which the athlete can attain through practice of the mind-body relationship can assist the player to attain full potential on the court (Yapko, 1984).

Visualization is not only visual, it can be auditory, emotional, muscular, and olfactory as well (Bry, 1976). Bandler and Grinder (1979) propose that most people have a preferred sense that is more well-developed and more heavily relied upon in processing day-to-day experiences. Some people are quite visual

and tend to think in pictures and remember or imagine images very clearly. Other people favor the auditory modality and talk to themselves about experiences. They remember and imagine sounds and conversations more completely. Still others favor the kinesthetic modality thinking in terms of feelings and movements with clarity. In working with players on a one-to-one basis, it is helpful to notice the player's language and to get a feel for the mental imagery techniques that are likely to be most effective with that particular individual. For the team as a whole, it is desirable to provide as much sensory input to as many modalities as possible. The following is an example of sensory imagery used after a relaxation exercise which served to help the team become vividly aware of the setting for the game to be played to maximize mental rehearsal.

> . . . And now it is game time and you are running with your team into the Hampton Coliseum. . . . The colors before you are brilliant under the lights of the Coliseum . . . brilliant and kaleidoscopic. . . . And now hear the sounds of the crowd, the roars of the crowd . . . the cheers . . . the laughter . . . the music . . . the loud speakers . . . and all the sounds are exhilarating to you. . . . The smells are familiar ones and they are basketball. . . . As

> you experience the sights, smells, sounds and movement, you begin to feel the great excitement of playing this game. . . . The excitement and joy begin to spread over you and a familiar word comes into your mind. . . . The word is DOMINATE . . . and as you wait for the start of the game, the word DOMINATE floods your mind, and it strengthens your body, and it is the exciting word DOMINATE that sets the tone for your season of basketball . . . the season of JMU DOMINATION. . . .

The above sequence was, according to team report, an effective visual practice and mood-setting scenario. They reported that the words of the imagery replayed mentally as they ran down the coliseum ramp, and they heard themselves repeating, "Dominate," as they gathered at the bench.

As previously mentioned, it was advantageous, whenever possible, to have imagery ideas produced by the players themselves. "Crunchtime" plays when the game came to the wire and "Boomtime" explosions of energy were other illustrations of cue words suggested by the team for strength and concentration effect. Taking part in the development of their imagery scripts accomplished a number of objectives as it enhanced the camaraderie and team spirit that trademarked the season; it

produced greater clarity of visualization, feeling, and identity with the game script; it allowed the team to exert greater control over themselves as athletes, besides serving as reinforcement for their contributions to the team effort.

Each player on the team also translated his individual short-range goal into imagery phrases which were written into pregame scripts. Those phrases included: "score the easy two with no one defending you"; "maintain the fast pressure tempo that has been built"; "keep enthusiasm up for the whole forty minutes"; "keep your running game going by filling the lane and getting the ball quickly down the court." The more identity with and commitment to the imagery, the better the team felt. As suggested by Henderson (1983), self-improvement of practically any kind is possible, but it must come from within.

Creativity and conventional behavior are not necessarily antithetical. To exhibit creative approaches, sports counselors must relate their new ideas to the real world in some way. Metaphorical imagery allows athletes to relate a novel idea to direct experience. A metaphor is a figure of speech which makes an implied comparison between things which are not literally alike. In the therapeutic sense, this includes any form of communication that conveys a meaningful message to the client on

conscious and/or unconscious levels (Yapko, 1984). Metaphors provide an opportunity for the athlete to identify with the characters and resolutions of the metaphor. This approach utilizes a multisensory framework as an ego-enhancing strategic intervention. The following script provides an example of metaphorical imagery that was very well received by the JMU Dukes. It was preceded by a relaxation exercise.

> . . . And now imagine yourself running . . . running freely . . . running along a strong stone wall . . . and running with your arms up in a joyful "Rocky" victory run with your eyes shining . . . and with a smile on your face . . . and you run freely until you decide to drop comfortably down, down, into the soft grass beside the wall . . . and to lie in the grass with your eyes still shining and your face still smiling, . . . and you look up into the blue, blue sky and feel again at one with nature and at peace with yourself. . . . And as you lie there in the soft grass looking into the blue sky you see a golden jet plane coming into view in your lower left visual field . . . and it moves slowly across the vast expanse of the sky, . . . slowly from one perimeter of the horizon to the other. . . . And as the jet moves across that vast

expanse of sky your eyes chart its progress as it streaks from the lower left of your visual field toward the upper right . . . and you look . . . really look at that golden jet . . . and you really look at its components now. . . . And you begin with the nose . . . the pointed nose that leads the plane through the sky on its upward climb . . . and now see the body with three lights beaming along the long, long body . . . and see its two wings like two arrows . . . straight and true . . . and as you watch that jet streak through the sky, climbing through your visual field, you feel as if you could fly to the sky . . . fly to the sky and become part of the plane as it soars on its climb . . . its important soaring climb. . . . And watch the jet run its maneuvers . . . watch it fly with intensity . . . watch it fly in formation . . . always heading straight and true . . . feel that jet plane streak down the airlane, filling the lane with a roar of command . . . and feel it always in position . . . zooming through the sky . . . setting its own flying tempo . . . led by its pointed nose. . . . It is majestic there up in the sky flying with such strength and poise that it looks unstoppable. . . . And now it breaks the sound barriers as

it rushes through the air . . . and it breaks the sound barriers as it dominates the air. . . .

And you are part of that plane now as it turns and spins and dives and glides . . . and you are part of that machine as it dominates the skies. . . . And it is just the fastest breaking plane you have ever seen . . . and it holds together cleanly as it zooms through the sky. . . . And now it penetrates . . . now it glides toward its goal . . . see it glide toward its goal. . . .

All systems are on go for this plane in its flight . . . all are on go for the unstoppable flight. . . . The plane moves at will as it slices through the sky. . . . The flight of this golden charger is like nothing ever seen before. . . . It is fast . . . it is right . . . and it is magic. . . .

The JMU Dukes requested tapes that they could play on the bus while traveling and in the locker room before games to help them arouse a high level of enthusiasm and drive. They enjoyed comparing themselves to Mack diesel trucks. The logo for Mack trucks, and also for JMU, is the bulldog. The following script is an amusing representation of metaphorical imagery which presents the team's uniqueness in a meaningful way to them.

(Mack truck brochures were also posted in the locker room.)

. . . And you are on the road again. . . . On the road and feeling strong, confident, ready to take on the world and have fun doing it. . . . So kick back, chill out, look at the diesel pictures . . . and listen to this wonderful description . . . a description of a machine that is you. Try it on and see . . . it is you!

So relax and get comfortable as I talk to you and describe how you are . . . a great . . . a strong . . . a bulldog diesel. . . .

You are incredibly strong . . . a breed apart. . . . You have proven components designed to work together for the greatest possible efficiency. . . .

You have been built to produce and keep on producing--mile after mile. You know where you're going and how to get there. . . . Beneath your handsome exterior you are rugged and easily repaired. . . . You are so rugged and strong every other truck has to play catchup. . . .

All of your instruments and controls have been engineered for ideal visibility, reach and comfort, and you use them for maximum efficiency. . . .

Bulldog diesel . . . you are on a leadership

mission . . . already on target for the 21st Century. . . . You have always been ahead of the times . . . but right on target for our time . . . the CAA time. . . .

You demonstrate a uniqueness that puts you ahead of your field and when you join the uniqueness of the whole bulldog fleet you more than just satisfy . . . you exceed expectations and do more than pay off . . . you pay block-busting dividends. . . . Nothing is more important than satisfying and exceeding your own expectations. . . .

Joining the whole bulldog fleet you produce one smooth flow. . . . You achieve control and quality performance through an integrated balanced design. . . .

Yours is the new diesel model that will set new standards in design and performance--21st Century CAA standards. . . . In all areas of vehicle design, you are aggressively renewing yourself and adding new meaning to the phrase, "Built like a bulldog diesel."

Still another type of metaphor in sports counseling deals with the images and allegories of story telling. In this approach, an original story in the form of a parable illustrates a desired attitude. This framework allows the athlete to identify with the characters in the depicted problem and to gain

unconscious solutions to be implemented in the present moment.

> . . . And so, by the light of their fire, the men lived in their cave and they talked about their plans and told stories of their feats and drew pictures on the walls that described their skills and actions, and they made plans about the forays and hunts that they would make.
>
> And so they did. They planned their hunts, selected their prey and went out together to kill and to provide the meat for their group. At first they were unsteady. The abilities were there and the hunting skills were there, but they did not know how to use them all. They had to learn how to put their very best parts together and to make a whole dangerous weapon that would kill most any beast.
>
> And at first their prey was small. They had to learn how to attack the creatures that they faced, how to kill them swiftly and surely with their blows and shots that flew. And so the band became more proficient with their weapons and they learned to use each one's special skills. Oh, they were not always successful in their hunts in which they fought. Sometimes the beasts eluded them--sometimes wounded them as well. But as I said, this group was special--quick to act and quick to see, and they learned

from each encounter how to improve their strikes more and more.

And all knew they were preparing for the biggest game of all--to kill the woolly mammoth and net the biggest prize of all. . . .

Foul Shooting

An important section in any sports counseling program for a basketball team is foul shooting. Basketball games are often won or lost at the foul line, and this constituted an area which required much creative effort to produce a number of varied imagery approaches. This variety was created in an effort to provide each member of the team with the means of mental practice which best suited him. The following are excerpts from three of those imagery scripts. The first is an example of a literal mental imagery.

. . . You practice free throws, . . . practice free throws now to insure that during the game your foul shooting will be perfect. . . . You practice your foul shooting now knowing the way you shoot them now will be the way you will also execute them perfectly during the game. . . . And so you walk up to the line, . . . walk up to the line and place your feet. . . . Take the ball . . . use your usual

physical routine . . . and shoot. . . . Good. . . . Take the ball . . . go on .utomatic pilot. . . . You have only calmness and smoothness in your head as you shoot. . . . Good. . . . Take the ball again. . . . A chance for two more points. . . . You smile, relax . . . use your usual physical routine and shoot. . . . Good. . . . And one more shot . . . take the ball . . . plant your feet . . . trust yourself . . . you are ready . . . relax. . . . Let your body take over and shoot. . . . Good. . . .

The second excerpt includes the use of a multisensory approach to imagery.

. . . The lights are bright, slightly warm and they have a golden cast or glow about them. . . .

Now see the floor on which you play basketball. . . . See the shiny, shellacked, tan surface. . . . See the painted lines. . . . See your feet in your white playing shoes on the floor . . . and hear the squeak of your shoes on the shiny floor. . . . Feel the hardness . . . the solidity of the floor under your feet . . . the hardness under your feet. . . . Jump . . . and feel that floor under you. . . .

And now hear the crowd . . . the shouts they

make . . . the yells. . . . See the kaleidoscope of colors of the crowd . . . their faces . . . their clothes . . . the sway of their movements . . . feel the warmth of their bodies in the center . . . hear their feet stomping and feel the vibrations in the gym from the stomping. . . .

Now see the other players on the floor with you. . . . They are lining up at the foul line. . . . Hear their sounds . . . the sounds of their feet . . . the sounds of their voices. . . . Some are your teammates and some are your opposition. . . .

You are the man who is about to shoot foul shots. . . . You are standing at the line and you have the ball in your hands. . . . See the color of the ball . . . see the lines on the basketball . . . and feel the lines and the texture of the ball. . . . Feel every bump and pore of that leather ball . . . feel the curve of its surface . . . feel its size. . . . And now bounce it. . . . Watch it drop . . . hear it smack the floor and feel it return to your hands. . . . Bounce it again slowly . . . and bounce it until you can actually feel that ball there in your hands. . . .

You are a member of the Colonial Athletic

Association. . . . Now see the word COLONIAL. . . . See the O's in COLONIAL. . . . The O's are baskets through which you will put the ball. . . . You want to win. The Colonial Association. . . . It is your goal. . . . To make your goal you must put the ball through the O's in COLONIAL. . . .

And you can do that. . . . You can do that because you have the desire to do it . . . the desire to throw the ball through the O's and win the COLONIAL. . . .

Now see the first O in COLONIAL fit over the rim of the basket. . . . You can see it and the basket becomes clearly defined. . . . There is your target plain and clear. . . . Throw the ball through and you make it . . . throw it through and you win. . . .

Do it. . . . Feel yourself get ready. . . . Preparation done. . . . Feel your body and arms move, . . . feel your hands release the ball . . . watch it fly through the O and you score. . . .

Excerpt number three presents another metaphorical idea which instilled a new confidence in many of the team players.

. . . You go out on the beach by the lake . . . go out on the beach by the water . . . and just look at the lake . . .

the totally clear . . . totally smooth . . . totally peaceful lake . . . and feel the sense of security and strength that is yours as you stand there. . . .

As you watch . . . a small circle appears . . . a very small ripple that grows larger as you watch . . . and then disappears. . . . And then another small circle spreading out . . . and you remember a time, long ago when you were a small boy . . . and you remember picking up stones and throwing them into the water . . . throwing them into the water . . . throwing them into the clear clean circle and see it now. . . . See yourself picking up stones from the beach and as a circle appears on the water . . . you throw the stone through the center . . . through the center of the circle that widens and disappears as another one starts and another circle comes to take its place . . . and another. . . and you throw one stone at a time through the center . . . through the direct center of the circle. . . .

And feel confident and peaceful and happy as you did when you were a very young boy throwing stones in the circle in the water of the lake. . . . And it happens over and over . . . as you throw stone after stone after stone in the circle in the water in the lake. . . . And remember

this feeling and you will be able to recapture it again and again and again . . . whenever you wish . . . whenever you have a need to relax . . . to be strong to do your best . . . you will remember what it is like to be here at this lake throwing stones in the circle in the water. . . .

Conclusions

Lectures, discussions, and group meetings were held before every game. New imagery scripts were written and/or modified for each game played by the team. In addition, quotations, cartoons, photographs, sketches, and charts were developed to accompany and emphasize the mental techniques. It should be noted that techniques never exist in isolation. The focus of a sports counseling program must be on the team members and the counselor. The techniques are means, not ends; they are not to be hidden behind or forced on the team (Corey, Corey, Callanan & Russell, 1982).

Some of the relaxation and imagery exercises were audiotaped so that the team could listen to the recordings in the locker room, before games, or in their own rooms when additional mental relaxation or practice was desired.

Following each relaxation/imagery exercise, a reentry scene was established as in the example which follows to give players

an orientation to their surroundings.

> . . . I will begin to count from one to ten . . . and as I count from one to ten you can begin coming back to full consciousness . . . coming back to this room . . . and will come back feeling refreshed as if you have had a long rest. . . . Come back feeling alert and relaxed. . . . Begin to come back now. . . . One . . . two . . . coming up, three . . . four . . . five . . . six . . . seven . . . eight . . . nine, . . . begin to open your eyes, and ten . . . open your eyes and come all the way back . . . feeling great. . . . Feeling good.

The creation of this sports counseling program was an exciting, satisfying endeavor. However, every imagery script which was written and every lecture which was presented was not a smashing success. Some ideas required modification and rewriting, while others were discarded in entirety. The examples contained in this paper represent some of the techniques that were the most successful with the James Madison University basketball team.

Ongoing research in the sports field will enable counselors to identify processes used by athletes to regulate and assess their performances. New intervention techniques as well as the

refinement of existing techniques will facilitate the achievement of athletic potential. Sports counseling is an important new field which is assisting athletes to increase their concentration and motivation, to regulate their emotional responses to competition, and to enhance the pleasure and satisfaction they derive from their sports.

"Take your beliefs and dreams as seriously as you do yourself because you are what you dream and believe."

-- Eileen Nelson

Reference Note

1. Warren, R. G. Leadership. Speech delivered at James Madison University, March 1986. (Adapted by permission.)

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